

Understanding variety-seekers and neopholics tasting traditional products

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Introduction

Preferences for **traditional food products** accentuate attention to region’s individuality, history, culinary heritage and local values. Traditional products are perceived as novel foods when they are introduced into a new territory.

AIMS:

1. Elicitation of the **consumer segments based on the variety-seeking and food neophobia**
2. Testing whether the segments are different in terms of higher levels of products’ **sensory preference and overall liking**
3. Analysing segments if they deliver different **evaluation of sensory attributes and willingness-to-buy**

Materials & methods

PLACE: Małopolska in Poland and East Flanders in Belgium

PRODUCTS: 2 truffles, 2 pralines, 2 cheeses, 2 hams, 2 dried hams, 2 meats, 2 juices, 2 breads:

- 8 traditional products from Małopolska tested with 177 respondents in East Flanders
- 8 traditional products from East Flanders evaluated with 210 Małopolska consumers

RESEARCH STEPS:

- **Segmentation**
 - ✓ Variety-seeking scale (VARSEEK, Van Trijp & Steenkamp, 1992)
 - ✓ Food Neophobia Scale (FNS, Pliner & Hobden, 1992)
- **Sensory liking and sensory attributes**
 - ✓ 5-point sensory preference scale
 - ✓ 9-point hedonic scale: overall liking for colour, smell and taste
 - ✓ 5-point just-about-right (JAR) scales for three sensory attributes (colour intensity, sourness-sweetness-saltiness, hardness-concentration
 - ✓ 5-point willingness-to-buy (WTB) scale
- **Socio-economic profiles of segments**
 - ✓ gender, age, income, education, place

ANALYSIS:

- ✓ Factor, cluster, discriminant analyses
- ✓ t-test, Pearson’s test

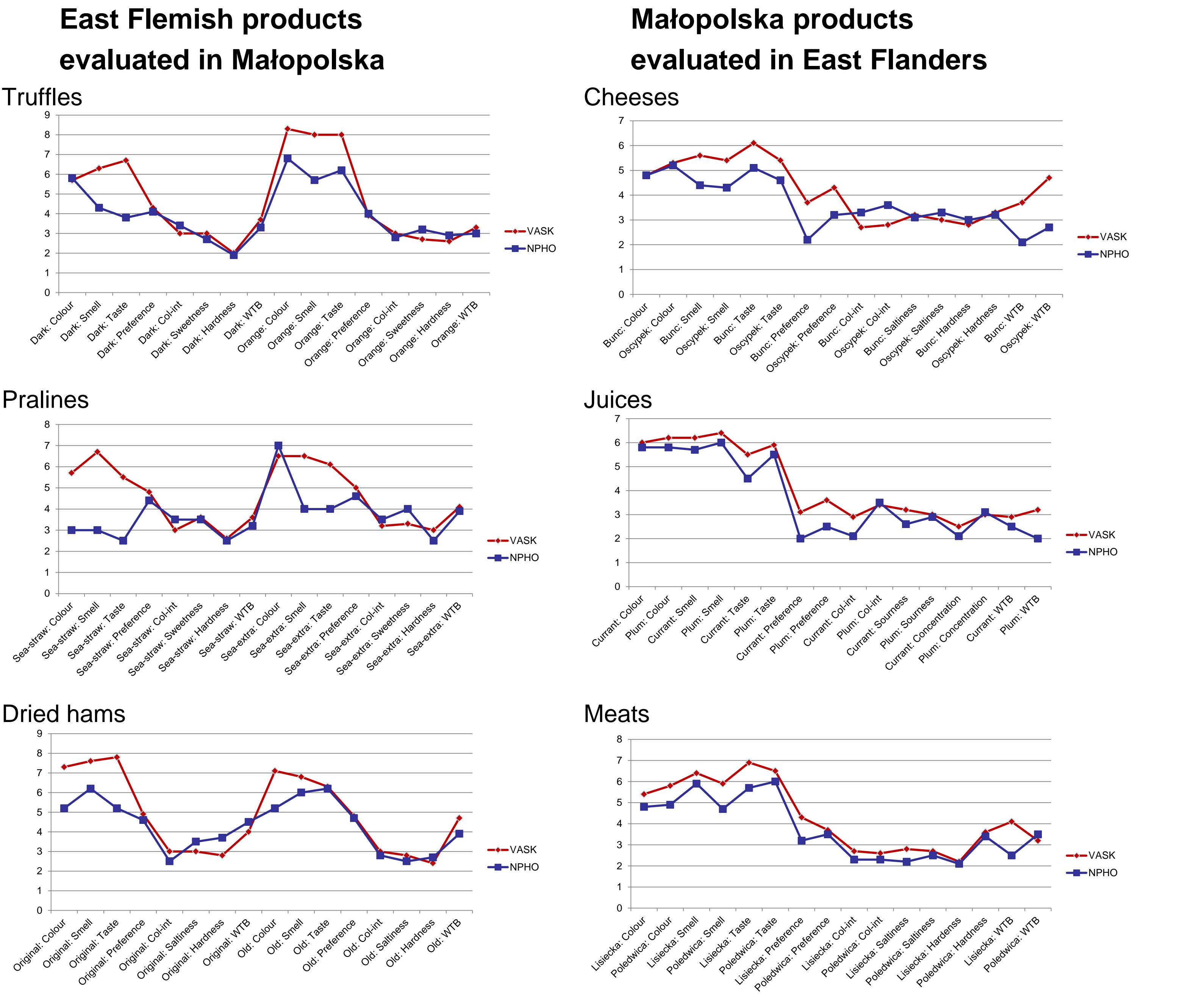
References:
Van Trijp, H. C. M. & Steenkamp, J. E. M. (1992). Consumers’ variety seeking tendency with respect to foods: Measurement and managerial implications. *European Review Agricultural Economics*, 19, 181–195
Pliner, P. & Hobden, K. (1992). Development of a scale to measure the trait of food neophobia in humans. *Appetite*, 19, 105–120

Results

1. Consumer segments in Małopolska and East Flanders

Factors names	Classification function coefficients				
	Małopolska		Flanders		
	VASK	NPHO	VASK	NPHO	
	N=164	N= 32	N=151	N= 42	
Variety-seeking	0,214	-1,098	-0,069	0,248	
Afraid	-0,458	2,345	-1,128	4,054	VASK – variety-seekers
Traditional	-0,352	1,803	-0,702	2,522	NPHO - neophobics
Unconformity	0,042	-0,215	0,119	-0,427	
Experimenting	0,332	-1,700	-0,164	0,589	
Discriminant Score (DS)	-0,222	1,135	-1,944	6,986	

2. Sensory liking and sensory attributes



3. Socio-economic profiles of segments

Income is only variable differing variety-seekers and neophobics in both regions. Variety-seekers in Małopolska: represented by lower income people, therefore price is important, however too low price of new traditional products might bring a negative effect. Variety-seekers in Flanders: represented by highly educated people with a medium income who live at the countryside.

Conclusions

Food neophobics: 19% in Małopolska and 28% in Flanders

Flanders : **variety-seekers** give **significantly higher liking scores** than neophobics and **higher WTB scores** on 2 traditional cheeses, juice and meat product

Małopolska: **variety-seekers** give **significantly higher WTB** scores on 3 traditional ham and meat products



Smell is the best sensory descriptor of liking, and information about sensory attributes measured on JAR scales gives a clear direction to the product developers. JAR scores are related to people’s psychological characteristics and deliver valuable information for product developers.

Variety-seeking or food neophobia is related to income, education level and place of living and it differs between respondents in European regions.

